

Press note

To disseminate the findings of a collaborative project on “**Functionality and utilization of Health and Wellness Centers and the user experience rural areas of three states of northern India (Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh)**”, Institute of Nursing Education and Research, AIIMS Bathinda organized a workshop on 12th February 2024 under the able guidance of Prof. (Dr) D. K. Singh, the honourable Executive Director & CEO of the Institute. Prof. (Dr) D. K. Singh sent his best wishes for the workshop. The project is funded by Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and carried out at three sites i.e. Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh by a team of researchers - Prof. (Dr.) Kamlesh K Sharma and Dr. Simarjeet Kaur (AIIMS, Bathinda), Dr. Muthuvenkatachalam S. (IHBAS Delhi), Dr. Pragya Pathak (Dr RMLIMS, Lucknow) and Dr. Mamta (AIIMS Jodhpur).

The Government of India launched the Ayushman Bharat Program (ABP) in February 2018, a comprehensive healthcare initiative aiming to provide financial protection and improve health outcomes for vulnerable and economically weaker population of India. One of the components of the scheme, the Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) are aimed at providing comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) services for the entire population. These centres provide expanded range of services, beyond maternal and child health care. It is necessary to evaluate facility functioning and gauge the user experiences with Health and Wellness Centres.

We were honoured to have the august presence of Prof. Akhilesh Pathak, Dean (Academics), Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Medical Superintendent; Lt. Col. Rajeev Sen Roy, Deputy Director Administration, AIIMS Bathinda; Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Kakkar, Head of Community and Family Medicine Department and other esteemed Head of departments and faculty, AIIMS Bathinda.

The workshop was graced by our guest of honour Dr. Tejwant Singh Dhillon, Civil Surgeon, District Bathinda. We also had the gracious presence of other stakeholders viz. Dr. Manish Gupta, District covid officer, civil hospital Bathinda, Medical Officers/Community Health Officers (CHO), ANMs, ASHAs, Anganwari Workers, Panchayat leaders and beneficiaries from rural areas of the concerned states. The stakeholders from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh joined the meeting online.

The day long activities included discussions and deliberations on the objectives of the project, methods of data collection and compilation and the major findings of the project. The findings regarding the “Functionality, utilization of Health & wellness centres and the user experiences were quite encouraging. However, a few challenges were also identified. All this paved the way for emergent recommendations to help the policy makers and other stakeholders to make informed decisions for improving the scheme and its outcomes. The final report will be submitted to Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR).